



June 23, 2017

## **COMMUNITY COLLEGES ADVOCATE IN WASHINGTON, D. C.**

In June, a delegation made up of representatives from the Chancellor's Office, the Community College League of California and the Faculty Association of the California Community Colleges met with congressional and administration officials to express their opposition to provisions in President Trump's proposed 2018 federal budget.

The focus was on preventing significant cuts to career technical education programs, including Perkins and Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act funded programs, as well as, financial aid programs such as the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant and Federal Work Study. These cuts will drastically reduce access to higher education for students with the most financial need.

Our team also expressed support for the 214,000 students in California that are protected under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) and keeping Pell grants on pace with inflation in future years.

## **EDUCATION SECRETARY MAKES TWO HIGHER EDUCATION APPOINTMENTS**

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos appointed Adam Kissel, formerly of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs. While at FIRE, Kissel was a frequent critic of colleges and universities for what FIRE viewed as violating the free speech rights of students and faculty. Mr. Kissel has also taken issue with the standard of proof used by colleges in the adjudication of recent sexual harassment and assault cases.

DeVos also appointed Dr. Wayne A. Johnson as Chief Operating Officer of Federal Student Aid (FSA). Johnson replaces former James Runcie who abruptly resigned from the position in May after serving since 2011. Runcie cited problems with the new administration in an email to colleagues. Dr. Johnson is Chairman and former CEO of First Performance Corporation, a global payment card technology platform company.

## **TRUMP ADMINISTRATION HALTS RULES ON FOR PROFIT COLLEGES**

The Education Department announced that they are establishing rulemaking committees to rework the Gainful Employment and the Borrow Defense to Repayment rules. These two regulations were written by the Obama Administration in the wake of the closure of Corinthian Colleges in order to protect students from misleading and predatory practices by for profit higher education institutions. While negotiated rulemaking occurs, applications for student debt relief will still be processed under the current borrower defense rules.

## RECENTLY INTRODUCED BILLS OF INTEREST

### **HR. 2944 (Huffman) The TORCH (To Offer Refugees College Help) Act**

HR. 2944 expands access to a college education for refugees, asylees and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders from Iraq and Afghanistan by providing an exemption to the nonresident tuition fee. The TORCH Act is an important measure because it can take years for some refugees, asylees, and SIV holders to establish state residency. Such individuals are ineligible for college in-state tuition rates during this transition period, which causes delays in completion of certificates, degrees, and transfer to four-year universities and colleges. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office supports efforts to provide affordable tuition rates for California students whenever possible in order to help them become part of the state's workforce. The policy changes made by the TORCH Act would enhance opportunities for these individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency and self-determination. A similar bill, AB 343 by Assembly Member Kevin McCarty, is currently making progress through the California State Senate.

- Position: *Support*

### **S.351 (Hatch) Comprehensive Student Achievement Information Act of 2017**

S. 351 creates a more comprehensive account of institutional performance than the system currently in place. It also streamlines relevant Higher Education Act (HEA) provisions and regulations. Community colleges would see a new completion rate calculated at 300% of the "normal time" to graduation for the vast majority of community college programs. This will enable prospective students to better assess their likelihood of finishing programs and stop improperly classifying students as "drop outs"